2 PAGE FAX TO PEGGY LAUER AT 415/928-6529

EDITORIAL & PRODUCTION PROCESS & DIRECTION MEETING

THURSDAY, JULY 9, 10 AM

To: All Production and Editorial Staff, Keith Jordan, Jon McIntire

From: Jonathan

The much delayed and rescheduled meeting to discuss the vast realm of things that need to be discussed is now set for the above date and time. Please do all you can do to be there. If you can not make it and have contributions to make please make those contributions via the appropriate topics in the "wed" conference on the WELL. Even if attending please use that conference to express your preliminary opinions so as to help every one prepare for this meeting.

To start the process here are at least some of the agenda items with some of my questions about them. Please feel free to add your own agenda items and most definitely develop your own responses to the issues facing us.

1) Implementation of a budget: A budget process is coming our way. How do we handle responsibilities for meeting projections and figures? Does everybody sign off on the implications? What are those implications?

2) Scheduling: If I set a schedule what am I supposed to do when that schedule is not met? How far ahead should I work? How many reminders do people want? Should I make individual schedules or a general one for the organization? When setting far-off meetings may I assume that there are certain time-slots (e.g. Thursdays at 10 am) that every one will generally be available for? What are those time-slots?

3) Procedures: Standard operating procedures are very helpful for the purposes of efficiency. With our relatively undemanding workload it is possible to do a lot of things on a fairly ad hoc basis, although confusion certainly increases. If we are to do books as well as the magazine things will have to be tighter. How highly organised do we wish to be? How will we develop those procedures that we wish to have? How strictly will we adher to them? How am I supposed to deal with situations when a procedure has not been followed leading to increased costs and/or delayed schedule?

4) Desktop production: Desktop production means that job roles and hours worked can change, e.g. a trained editor or proofreader can alter text without sending it through typesetting, paste-up no longer exists. These changes can increase efficiency. Do we wish to allow this to happen or do we wish to maintain the basic job functions we currently have?

5) The next year: If we develop the above four areas how do we implement them with the series of guest editors we will be dealing with? How much flexibility can we have? If various people are not around at the time we need to make a decision (design approval, text changes, etc.) are we comfortable with delegating that decision making? Will they be comfortable with delegation?

6) Contributing editors: I propose making the Contributing Editors section of the masthead mean something. What are your suggestions?

7) How to submit: I propose fairly extensive reworking of our How to submit/Writers guidelines to reflect the changes that have occurred since they were first drawn up. Any suggestions?

8) Number of pages: Keith thinks that we should discuss reducing the number of pages in an issue to 128 with the savings being used for such things as higher quality paper, increased contributor pay, staff raises, etc. What are your responses?

You have probably noticed that a common thread through these topics is what my job functions are as Managing Editor. We are undoubtedly in a time of ongoing changes. If we are to weather them successfully I believe that it is necessary to coordinate our resources. This implies some collection of "intelligence," which seems to me to be the key role of a full-time Managing Editor. This will only work if we all understand the implications of the changes and agree that this is the way we wish to go. I do not believe that direction by fiat is appropriate in our outfit, but neither do I believe that concensus will always yield the correct outcome. I will always consult with all affected people when attempting to reach a decision, but ultimately when a decision needs to be reached I will take responsibility for it. Decisions will be changed when it becomes apparent that they are wrong.

Please think about these matters, formulate your responses and suggestions, post them on the WELL or discuss them prior to the meeting. Thank you.